

γ -Iron Phase Stabilized at Room Temperature by Thermally Processed Graphene Oxide

Khannanov A., Kiiamov A., Valimukhametova A., Tayurskii D., Börrnert F., Kaiser U., Eigler S., Vagizov F., Dimiev A.

Kazan Federal University, 420008, Kremlevskaya 18, Kazan, Russia

Abstract

© 2018 American Chemical Society. Stabilizing nanoparticles on surfaces, such as graphene, is a growing field of research. Thereby, iron particle stabilization on carbon materials is attractive and finds applications in charge-storage devices, catalysis, and others. In this work, we describe the discovery of iron nanoparticles with the face-centered cubic structure that was postulated not to exist at ambient conditions. In bulk, the γ -iron phase is formed only above 917 °C, and transforms back to the thermodynamically favored α -phase upon cooling. Here, with X-ray diffraction and Mössbauer spectroscopy we unambiguously demonstrate the unexpected room-temperature stability of the γ -phase of iron in the form of the austenitic nanoparticles with low carbon content from 0.60% through 0.93%. The nanoparticles have controllable diameter range from 30 nm through 200 nm. They are stabilized by a layer of Fe/C solid solution on the surface, serving as the buffer controlling carbon content in the core, and by a few-layer graphene as an outermost shell.

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